

INTERESTING ITEMS FROM THE CITIES

New York Zoo Has a Snake That Blows Itself Up

NEW YORK.—Keeper Charley Snyder of the snakehouse up at the Bronx park zoo got a new bunch the other day for his old scheme of crossing the hoop snake with the puff adder, and thereby turning out a constant supply of living toys for automobiles. For the first time in the experience of even the noted snake expert of the Bronx park reptile house, Dr. Raymond Dismare, a snake came to the park which can blow itself up like a Wall Street bull market.

The snake was sent to the zoo by a party of naturalists now in South America looking up specimens for the Zoological society. It is about four feet long and normally not fatter than a broom handle. The moment that it is inflated it first seems to become obsessed with the notion that it is another Charlotte of the Hippodrome ice ballet and begins to throw itself into grapevine twists, figure eights and capital S's. There were hopes that it could also write its name with itself, but this feat seemed beyond it.

When it takes a deep breath or something, however, is the time that its great mental and physical gifts are displayed at their best. One moment the crowd saw a snake an inch or less in diameter and the next moment it was a Zeppelin.

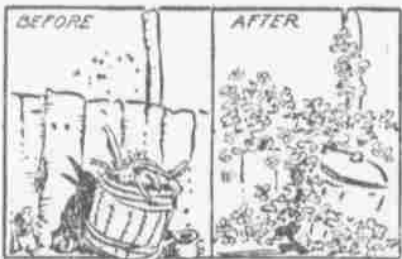
All four feet of the snake begin to swell until the body measures from three to four inches in diameter from head to steering gear. The snake will remain inflated for some time then, or until it reaches a decision that enough is enough. Thereupon it collapses with the suddenness and general hullabaloo of an automobile tire.

Detroit Will Make Garden Spots of Its Alleys

DETROIT.—Not the desert, but the alleys of Detroit, will be made to blossom as the rose, also the morning glory, the clematis, even the wild cucumber, if the plan inaugurated by the home and school gardening committee of the Twentieth Century club, of which Mrs. George G. Caron is chairman, receives the hearty co-operation of the home-loving citizens of Detroit.

An ordinance has recently been passed which provides for cleaner alleys, and the gardening committee wish to make a pleasure of duty, and stimulate interest in the beautifying, as well as the cleaning, of the alleys. So in the fall there are to be prizes for the best alleys in various blocks throughout the city, where the citizens are to enter the contest. The planting of flowers along the fences, inside and out, and the training of vines to hide ugly buildings on the alleys will be part of the scheme. Philip Breitmeyer has given \$100 in prizes, and a like amount will be given by the Twentieth Century club.

Any city block where the garden markers wish to organize may have the service and advice of Leon B. Gardner, who has been secured by the club to assist the work of forming community gardens. It is the desire of the club to stimulate an esthetic interest in beautifying property on the part of home-makers, as well as to encourage the children to plant gardens of their own.



Queer Things Found in Gotham's Slot Telephones

NEW YORK.—"You would be surprised," said the telephone man, "to see the amount and variety of junk sorted from the nickel-in-the-slot machine telephones in New York city every month. Last month we had two small barrels of assorted coins, slugs and other things. There are various foreign coins, such as German 2½ pfennig pieces. They may be about the size of a nickel, but they are of considerably less value. On the other hand, an occasional gold coin gleams forth from the dirty pile of iron and copper. When one of these comes along it helps to make up the deficiency, but in the long run of course we lose."

"Probably you know," continued the telephone man, "that some rural districts are equipped with what are known as farmer lines, that is a local service. Farmers are not noted for the great amount of ready cash they carry about with them; furthermore, it is inconvenient for persons in isolated districts to be always supplied with change. So arrangement is made with some local merchant who acts as a banker. He sells the farmer slugs which are the size and shape of a five-cent piece. Now it must be that a lot of men are drifting in from the big towns every day and fetching along pocketfuls of these iron slugs, for we are constantly finding them."

"There is another interesting phase about this petty form of dishonesty. Of course you know that New York is a gum-chewing town and probably the habit has its mental effect, especially on the young. It isn't at all likely that a boy could chew gum all the way from the Bronx to the Battery every day and even up to lunch time without thinking after a while of something else to do with the gum. We sometimes find two pennies stuck together with chewing gum and sometimes a wad of gum sandwiched between two pieces of tin. Then, of course, all the nickels in New York that have holes in them and those that have been clipped eventually find their way into pay-station phones."

Antiprofanity Club Organized in Bucyrus, Ohio

BUCYRUS, O.—Several of the most respected citizens of Bucyrus have formed what they call an "Antiprofanity club," and it is said the membership is constantly increasing. It appears that these gentlemen who have taken the initiative in the establishment of this organization have heretofore been addicted to the use of violent and picturesque language when things didn't go along smoothly. It appears that before this club was formed there was considerable rivalry in Bucyrus among the charter members as to which one could, under stress, emit the largest volume of sulphuric language in a given time without repeating himself. In fact, they were quite proud of their ability to express themselves in a loud and vehement manner. When a Bucyrus citizen began to talk in the language of a pirate it was not unusual for the neighbors to call their children in off the street and close the windows.

At last, however, the wives, daughters, sisters and sweethearts of these naughty word jugglers shamed them into reform. The ladies pointed out to them the evil influence their profanity was sure to have on the rising generation of the town, and suggested that when a man resorts to profanity to express himself it is an admission that his education in pure English has been neglected.

These arguments seemed reasonable, so the gentlemen who had been doing ground and lofty tumbling as to their use of profane language got together and formed the Antiprofanity club.

In lieu of the volcanic verbal eruptions which they formerly used, each member of the club has been furnished with a list of mild and harmless expletives to be used in case of emergency. Here are a few of these gentle and refined expletives:

"Mercurial!" "Oh, goodness!" "Lulu-lu!" "Gracious sake!" "Gee-whilliker!" "Dad-blast!" and "Ding-bust it!" "Ding-bust it!" is regarded by the club members as perhaps the most forceful and expressive expletive in the list, and as a result there has probably been more "ding-busting" done recently in Bucyrus than in any other town of the same population in the United States.



ITALIANS CHECK AUSTRIAN DRIVE

Count Cadorna's Victory Is Being Compared to Battle of Marne.

FOUGHT FOR FORTY DAYS

Italians Fight With Backs to Long Line of Precipices Over Which Onslaughts of Enemy Threatened to Hurl Them.

By A. BEAUMONT.

Milan.—Italians are comparing Count Cadorna's great victory, when he checked the Austrian drive from the Trentino and threw the foe back headlong, to the Battle of the Marne. I have just learned new details of this action.

The defending army at the moment the drive began, I am assured, amounted hardly to two divisions (40,000 to 60,000 men). They had to hold the enemy in check until a powerful army of offense could be concentrated at their back.

The ground thus heroically contested was a tortuous line of Alpine peaks, the chief of which, after the famous Monte Pasubio, were the summits of Forni, Alti, Monte Alba, Monte Novogna, Monte Pua, Monte Magnaboschi, Cima Echar and Monte Lissar.

Fought Furiously.

A young officer, who was at Monte Lissar only a few days ago, gave me a graphic account of these positions. The retreating battle had been fought furiously, almost night and day, for 40 days. The enemy was already gaining glimpses over the mountain passes of the smiling plains of Vicenza below.

The Italian soldiers were fighting with their backs to a long line of precipices, over which the furious and incessant onslaught of the desperate enemy, whose numbers seemed inexhaustible, threatened to hurl them.

Suddenly there came a feeling of relief. Sledge-hammer blows were being dealt to the Austrians on the extreme right and left wings. The enemy's attack in the center instantly became less resolute, and the Italian troops, who had hitherto been retreating, found to their joy that they were backed by huge lines of impregnable defenses, prepared during those 40 days, and masses of troops and artillery were eager to come forward and take the places of the brave men who had so long defended the dangerous line.

Hours passed in eager expectation. The last scene in the preparation was the arrival of the guns. They were towed up the steep paths; dragged up by sheer work of hand to seemingly inaccessible summits. Ammunition trains stood thickly behind, waiting to unload.

Swarm Up Mountain.

Thousands upon thousands of troops were swarming up the mountain slopes. New roads sprang into existence where none had been before. Batteries made their appearance where only eagles had built their nests, and the last desperate skirmish on Monte Lemerle and Magnaboschi had scarcely subsided when hundreds of Italian guns opened fire with an infernal chorus.

Shells flew thick and heavy from the lines between Monte Pua and Monte Stremed, across the valley of Asiago, and word came that the Austrians were yielding and falling back.

The Italian infantry immediately took up the pursuit. They rushed down the mountain slopes, raising their war cry of "Savoy," and occupied Cesuma and Gallo. Thence they spread along the roads of the entire valley, re-entered Asiago, and continued the pursuit of the enemy on Monte Longara, to the north, and Monte Cengio, to the south.

And everywhere the Austrians were found in full retreat, or offering only a weak resistance.

The enemy has set fire to the little mountain villages and hamlets, and is falling back upon the immediate defenses of Rovereto. Thus the first fugitives of the defeated army are returning to this town, whence they had set out 40 days ago on their "punitive expedition," with the punishment turning against themselves.

BOYS PUMP THE WELL DRY

Wanted to See a Water Wheel Work and Left Their Play—Clever Work of Citizen.

Brazil, Ind.—Finding that surface water running into his well had made the water impure, a citizen of Brazil started to pump his well dry. After pumping half an hour in the hot sun, he gave up the job.

Then he made a miniature water wheel, which he attached to the end of a trough. After he had attracted the attention of several boys who were playing on a vacant lot, he went to his work. When he returned in the evening, the boys had pumped the well dry, to see the wheel go round.

Baby Fell in Hole and Starved.

St. Joseph, Mo.—The body of Louise Tye, an eighteen-months-old child, who wandered away from her parents, was found by searchers in a hole in an abandoned brickyard. The baby had been dead about 48 hours. Indications were that she had starved to death.

MORE BOY BABIES IN CANADA

Since War Began the Birth Rate of Female Babies Has Decreased.

Winnipeg, Man.—More Canadian male babies have been born than ever before since Canada went to war, and femininity has greatly decreased during the war period.

Vital statistics show that in the 23 months 11,794 babies were born. Of these 6,170 were boys and 5,624 girls.

HERO OF POZIERES



Gen. Sir William R. Birdwood, commander of the Australian troops who captured Pozieres from the Germans after desperate fighting.

695-POUND TUNA CAPTURED

Monster Taken in Net Seven Miles Off Block Island—Much Larger Than California's.

Newport, R. I.—Few people realize that the coast adjacent to Rhode Island boasts fish larger than those off the shores of California. Such is the case, however, and Capt. Hugh L. Willoughby, who has just returned from a trip to Block Island in his motorboat Sea Otter, tells a reporter that he weighed a monster tuna fish which tipped the scales at 695 pounds.

"Yes," said Captain Willoughby, "we have an affidavit as to the weight. California's tuna fish never exceed 300 pounds."

The big fish was caught in a fisherman's net about seven miles southeast of Block Island and had to be speared before being prepared for shipment to New York. Meanwhile the fisherman was trying to figure out whether the price of the monster will pay to repair his net, which were torn to shreds in the death struggle.

"As regards sharks," said Captain Willoughby, "I believe that there never were any two varieties, such as common and man-eating sharks."

"The menhaden fishing industry has cleaned the waters of the food for the sharks and they are hungry. Any shark will eat human beings in this state."

THIS OLD WOMAN MAKES HAY

Although Eighty-Four Years Old Mrs. Nellie France Can Mow and Has a Fine Garden.

Cookeville, Tenn.—Mrs. Nellie France, aged eighty-four, who lives near Beaver Hill, mowed hay last week. "Aunt Nellie" enjoys remarkably good health. She has a splendid garden which she has made herself, doing all of the hoeing.

While her hay was being mowed she went to the hay field and asked permission to drive the mower, which was being pulled by two large mules. Her request being granted, she made several rounds in the large hay field. She did the work with steady nerve and insisted upon driving longer, but the overseer, fearing that she would overexert herself, prevailed upon her not to do so.

The day following, however, she donned her sunbonnet and went back to the hay field and mowed all day.

She frequently rides horseback from her home to Monterey, a distance of eight miles.

MORE AIR IN GERMAN CARS

New Rules Permit Open Windows in Coaches Under Certain Conditions.

London.—"Anybody who has ever fought for fresh air in a German railway carriage," writes a correspondent in the Daily Mail, "will be interested to hear that, even amid the preoccupations of war, the authorities are making an effort to solve so weighty a problem. The Berliner Tagblatt learns that henceforth in a compartment separated from other compartments by a swinging door, windows may be opened only if all the passengers in the compartment consent."

"In other compartments any one passenger has the right to demand the opening of a window."

"These regulations are now printed on the windows themselves, and it is hoped that the violent arguments which have hitherto resulted from attempts to let fresh air into stifling compartments will be less frequent."

Gnats Cause Fire Alarm.

Janesville, Wis.—An alarm of fire the other evening brought two companies of the department to the First Congregational church. An excited individual "flagged" down the equipment and pointed to the steeple with the information that the blaze was inside it. Investigation showed a great dense swarm of gnats about the spire. This was the "smoke."

Meteor as Big as a House.

Hot Springs, Ark.—A meteor, the unburied part of which is as large as a five-room house, fell one night recently on a farm near here. For some time farmers were afraid to approach it because of gases and smoke that arose from it.

Hen Many Times a Grandmother.

Beaverdale, Pa.—Thomas Manlio owns a hen that is thirty-six years of age. Each year she has hatched a brood of chicks. She is a good layer and a grandmother many times over.

FRANCE HAS NEW AIR DAREDEVIL

Former Cavalryman Performs Astonishing Feats of Valor With Aeroplane.

IS MANY TIMES DECORATED

Pronounced Permanently Disabled After Smash-Up, He Steals Machine and Goes Forth to New Deeds of Heroism.

Paris.—Nungesser, the latest airman to be revealed to us as a prince among pilots, is a great, big, heavy fellow, fat-faced and cumbersome of build.

He was a cavalryman in the Second Hussars when he started his career, and the war was not a month old before he distinguished himself.

His squadron was cut off and surrounded in the retreat from Charleroi. The troop commander was lying helpless, badly wounded. Nungesser bore him to shelter. Getting a few stragglers together, he ambushed a German staff motor car, killed its occupants, put his wounded officer inside, and taking the wheel set off on a wild dash through the enemy's lines. The car was a powerful Mercedes, and the way Nungesser let her all out and tore through the whole ranks of Germans earned for him the epithet of "Dash to Death."

Nungesser was subsequently promoted quartermaster, awarded the military medal, and permanently appointed army chauffeur.

Takes to Flying.

Nungesser later handed in his resignation and declared that unless he was put into the flying corps he would take his place in the trenches. He already had a pilot's ticket, and after a week or two of training was passed as good for military aviation.

Between April and August, 1915, he took part in 53 bombing expeditions, three of which secured him fresh mentions in dispatches. Returning from the last, he espied a German Albatross over Nancy, went for it, despite the handicap of his heavy, slow machine, insufficiently armed for single combat, and shot down the invader. This achievement brought him into prominence and he was promoted to the rank of captain. Before the end of the year he had been made chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

A side slip at Bue, however, when trying a new type of machine, almost cost him his life. He was picked up for dead, with a fractured skull, a broken jaw, nearly all his ribs broken, the muscles of the legs torn away.

Nungesser refused to accept the doctor's decision that he was permanently disabled; he declined to take three months' convalescence, if he ever wanted to be of any use again—and almost stealing a machine, he soared aloft, and never came down until he had accounted for a German aeroplane.

Given His Own Way.

After this he was allowed to have his own way. He could scarcely talk, owing to the necessity of binding up his jaw, his head was swathed in bandages, he had to be lifted in and out of his aeroplane, but he was a perfect demon once aloft. He then became a sub-lieutenant.

This was at the end of March and the beginning of April last. On April 23 he engaged, single-handed, three Fokkers, brought down one and gave the others a severe mauling. A week later he was swamped down upon by a flotilla of six Fokkers. He had one down before they could get his range almost, and then sailed at full speed right into the midst of the others.

They were unable to fire, for fear of hitting one another, whereas he pounded them hard until he had not a shot left, then by masterly firmness, he showed them a clean pair of heels. They were in such a state that they did not dare follow him, which was lucky, for he had not gone a mile or two before his engine went all to pieces. Seven balls had gone through it, and only a couple of cylinders still had any gas in them. He had dropped to under 3,000 feet, and was limping lamely as he crawled back over the German trenches.

The storm of shells missed him all the same and he made home safely. One shot had gone through his helmet and grazed the top of his head, another had carried away the heel of his slipper, 27 had struck the plane and done various kinds of damage without coming through in the engine.

RICH THRICE, DIES POOR

Philip Deidesheimer, Once Famous as Mining Engineer, Passes Away in Poverty.

San Francisco.—Philip Deidesheimer, eighty-four, a mining engineer once famous, died in poverty here. His invention of the "square set," a system of underground tunneling used in wide veins, made possible the development of the famous Uphr mine on the Comstock lode. His invention, according to mining engineers, is now used all over the world.

Deidesheimer made and lost three fortunes. He died in poverty, but hopeful to the last that his mining claims would restore him to affluence.

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NATIONAL CAPITAL AFFAIRS

Big Copper Mine Exhibit in the National Museum

WASHINGTON.—Visitors at the United States National museum are expressing much interest in the new copper mine exhibit recently installed by the division of mineral technology. This exhibit consists of what is known as a stopes from the Copper Queen mine at Bisbee, Ariz., one of the celebrated copper mines of the world.

Stopping is the term applied to an actual mining process by which ore occurring in veins is removed from a mine after it has been rendered accessible by the necessary preliminary excavation, namely the sinking of shafts and running drifts; accordingly a stopes is one of the many units employed in this form of mining.

The stopes on exhibition is not merely a model, but an actual piece of the real mine, removed bodily, ore faces, timbering, chutes and all, from its original setting to a room in the division of mineral technology in the older National museum building. Accordingly, as the visitor passes through the entrance into the museum mine he finds himself, to all intents and purposes, in exactly the surroundings in which he would be placed were he to enter the Copper Queen mine cage at Bisbee, and descend the shaft hundreds of feet into the depths of the earth to the working level and enter one of the stopes. The only difference is that he need not enter the dusty cage nor descend to the bottom of the shaft.

New Mail Devices Saving Money for Uncle Sam

THE government is saving thousands of dollars annually through the introduction of new and improved devices used by the post office department in handling mail. Among the varied industrial enterprises of the department is an establishment devoted entirely to the manufacture of mail locks and the bag attachments used in mail transportation.

Until recently the lock used by the post office weighed five and one-half ounces; the new one weighs two and four-fifths ounces. The old locks cost 21 cents to make and the new ones are being manufactured for 8½ cents. The post office has put \$30,000 of the new product into the service. The saving on the original cost of production to date amounts to \$53,750. Of the old style, 26,000 were annually returned for repairs at a cost of 9 cents each. Of the new style, out of the great number sent into the service, but 903 have been returned, and as these new style locks can be repaired at a cost of 3 cents each, the annual saving on this item will amount to over \$2,100.

The department has encouraged its employees to give their best service to the government, and many instances have recently come to notice wherein the department has greatly profited by this wise public policy. In the lock shop a recent achievement in this direction is an improved cord fastener, the work of three of its employees, for use on bags; also one designed for locking large quantities of parcel-post matter, which has heretofore been without this protection.



Aged Marksman Who Rids Washington of Pigeons

A GRAY-HEADED man was standing in front of the treasury building the other day, with a rifle at his shoulder. Every few minutes he would take careful aim, pull the trigger, and down would flutter a dead pigeon. After eight or nine of the birds had been winged a man who had been watching him closely came up to him.

"I'm going to arrest you!" he told the marksman.

"What are you going to arrest me for?"

"For cruelty to animals!" replied the other.

"Have you been here for the last half hour, and seen me shoot?" asked the rifleman. The stranger admitted he had.

"Did you see me miss anything?" "No."

"Well, ain't you bigger than a pigeon?" Amid the laughter of the crowd the stranger turned and walked away, with a queer look on his face.

Evidently he did not know that Uncle Eak Gadsby, for such was the rifleman, was the most expert shot in Washington with that weapon, and had a permit from the District of Columbia police to carry and shoot his rifle anywhere in the District.

In fact, J. Eak Gadsby is the aid of the police department in matter of ridding the air of superfluous pigeons, and the ground of surplus cats.

The shooting is done under authority of a police permit. He has been a keen shot for 50 years, ever since he was a page in the capitol during Lincoln's administration, and was familiarly known as "Lincoln's Boy," for he was the president's favorite messenger.

Uncle "Eak" it was who cleared the inside dome of the congressional library of pigeons, taking 21 shots, and bringing down 19 birds, all without making the least scratch on the golden-leaf work inside the dome.

Uncle "Eak" has shot a rifle for 50 of his 70 years, and was in his early days a powerful stroke on the Potomac.

Mr. Gadsby also shoots cats, on request of the District police, when they are becoming a nuisance, but with reluctance. He does the shooting for pleasure, never accepting a fee for it.

Fauna of the District of Columbia Is Varied

A MAN may study with a good deal of interest the collection in the National museum classified as "The Animals of the District of Columbia." Not only the number and variety of the exhibits will impress him, but he will probably be interested in the age of some of the exhibits and in the great number of men and women who have made contributions to the collection.

There is a fine specimen of otter, the fur of which has so long been highly prized, and the card attached to this specimen says that it was derived from the old collection of the National Institute museum. The following additional information is given: "Otters are now (1914) very rare about Washington, but some are still resident on the Potomac above Little Falls."

One case contains salamanders, strange little animals which are common enough about Washington, but when seen are usually dismissed as being lizards. One is a yellow-spotted salamander. It is a jet black fellow about eight inches long, thickly sprinkled with vivid yellow spots which are generally about the size of a lady's little finger nail. This specimen was captured in Rock Creek park and presented to the museum by Dr. E. A. Mearns. The descriptive card says of the species that it is seldom seen and not very common; that it frequents low, damp woods and lives mainly under logs and leaves. It is quite harmless and, like other species of the salamander, moves about and feeds at night.

The various specimens of terrapin and tortoise which occur within the District of Columbia are presented for the enlightenment of visitors. One exhibit is of a yellow-spotted terrapin which was found on Northwest branch in Prince Georges county and presented to the museum last year by John and Edwin Bean. The official description of it says that it may be found along woodland streams and in small marshes, and that though not now common, it was once abundant within the District of Columbia.

Close by is a small collection of snakes which are either natives of the District of Columbia or were born very close to the boundaries of the federal district.



POSTSCRIPTS

The Australians are the greatest meat eaters in the world.

Railroads of the United States now operate 51,400 passenger cars.

The public library of Cincinnati makes and loans lantern slides.

Two Illinois inventors have patented a waterproof coat made of a single piece of paper.

A New Jersey inventor has patented a garden tool that can be used as rake, weeder or shovel.

Rubber cups which any person can attach to the heels of his shoes to aid in walking have been patented by a Philadelphia woman.

During the last year there were 1,300 fires caused by cigars and cigarettes carelessly thrown away in New York alone. The average loss a fire is about \$500.

The electrical energy sold in London, exclusive of that used for traction, increased from 14,200,000 kilowatt-hours in 1880 to 334,442,700 kilowatt-hours in 1914.